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ABSTRACT

This manual was designed for Catholic Relief Services staff who want to improve the health and nutrition component of maternal and child health programs. The methodology presented had already been used in two country programs in Africa, and the experiences in those program evaluations made this guide to participatory evaluation useful for other evaluation situations. Chapters 1 and 2 discuss a number of concepts that underlie a participatory approach to evaluation, setting the stage for the discussion of practical evaluation steps in chapter 3. These include: (1) preplanning meetings; (2) the evaluation planning workshop; (3) field data collection and analysis; (4) a workshop to formulate the lessons learned; (5) development of an action plan; and (6) the finalization and dissemination of the evaluation report. Chapter 4 presents some conclusions about the use of participatory evaluation. It stresses the importance of careful planning and the availability of certain human and other resources. Chapter 5 presents some cautions related to the use of the participatory methodology, and chapter 6 contains a list of 19 practical references for evaluators. (SLD)

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PARTICIPATORY PROGRAM EVALUATION:

A manual for involving program stakeholders in the evaluation process

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PARTICIPATORY PROGRAM EVALUATION:

A manual for involving program stakeholders in the evaluation process

Judi Aubel

Catholic Relief Services–USCC
Giving Hope To A World Of Need

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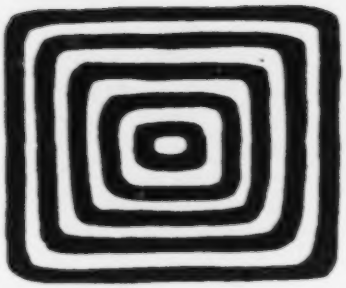

Acknowledgements

The participatory evaluation methodology presented here draws heavily on the work of the North American educator, Michael Quinn Patton. His conviction that an evaluation exercise should constitute a learning experience for program practitioners resounds throughout this work. Several of his books are included in the bibliography and I strongly recommend them to those who want to know more about participatory and qualitative methodologies. A second important influence on the development of the methodology has been the work of David Korten, development management specialist. Korten has argued that organizations need to develop mechanisms which promote ongoing "institutional learning". I believe that this evaluation methodology, which aims to develop program implementors' ability to analyze and learn from their own programs, responds in a small way to Korten's challenge.

The methodology is also influenced by the recent developments in Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) in the field of rural development, and in Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP) in the health and nutrition field. The methodological developments in RRA and RAP are attempts to identify approaches to data collection which are less time consuming than conventional research methods while at the same time fostering more horizontal, informal relationships between researchers and interviewees. This evaluation methodology is in keeping with many of the key concepts of RRA and RAP.

This manual is also based on the actual experiences which I have had coordinating evaluations with teams of program implementors in The Cameroon, The Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Ecuador.Each of those experiences contributed to the search for a practical yet conceptually sound approach to evaluating programs **with** program implementors.

I would particularly like to express my appreciation to colleagues at the Gambian Food and Nutrition Association (GAFNA) and at CRS in the Gambia, and to CRS and CRS' counterpart organizations in Sierra Leone.

The development of this manual was possible because of the interest and support of Susan Hahn, Dakar Cluster Director. Special thanks are addressed to Tamara Underwood for her help in developing the initial plan for the manual, to Joan Milsap and Kate White for their constructive editing, and to Bret Harris for his creative and patient work on the layout of the manuscript.

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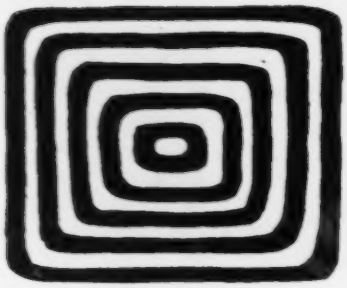


Foreword

This manual is for CRS staff, particularly program managers, who want to improve the health and nutrition component of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programs. The methodology presented here has already been used in two country programs, CRS/Sierra Leone and CRS/The Gambia. In both cases, substantive lessons were learned about what was being done well and what needed improvement. Further, very practical and measurable plans of action were developed based on these lessons that became the core of the PL 480 Title II planning documents.

The strengths of the participatory approach to evaluation are several. For CRS, particularly in the MCH programs, this approach brings together counterparts and community collaborators (decision-makers and stakeholders) in the assessment of a program that is important to them. Involving them directly in the evaluation focuses the scope of work so that the issues addressed are relevant to the key players.

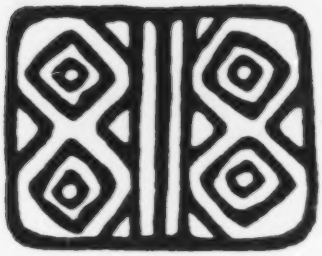
Evaluations are not easy. The methodological approach in this manual provides a structure that enables managers to organize very complex programs into manageable components for evaluation. While this manual is designed for use in MCH programs, the theoretical underpinnings, evaluation methodology, data collection and analysis procedures presented should be useful for any staff in evaluating any project.

Using the participatory methodology, with the assistance of a dynamic and experienced evaluation coordinator, can be a tremendously valuable learning experience for CRS and counterpart staff. The manual provides a step by step guide from the beginning to the end of an evaluation process.

CRS staff and counterparts in Sierra Leone and The Gambia were very satisfied with the process and the results. They were pleased to learn so much about evaluation through very practical experience. They were surprised that so many useful lessons were learned. They were encouraged by the action plans that were developed as part of the process. And, they were motivated because of their "ownership" of the final recommendations and action plan.

We in the Dakar Cluster encourage you to take the time to review the manual thoroughly. We hope that it will become a "well-thumbed" addition to your library.

Susan L. Hahn, Ph.D.
Dakar Cluster Director
November 23, 1993



Introduction 1

Purpose of this manual

This manual is intended as a tool which CRS program staff and their institutional collaborators (counterparts and other government and community actors) can use to evaluate ongoing Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programs. There are many ways to go about evaluating a project or program. The choice of the most appropriate approach largely depends on the goal & objectives of the evaluation as well as on the availability of human & material resources for the activity. The methodology described here has been found to be very effective for use in process evaluations in which the aim is primarily to assess the program implementation process. The evaluation methodology focuses on the analysis of program activities and strategies which have been implemented and on the **development of "lessons learned"** which can be applied in the future. Given this orientation, it is particularly well-suited to the evaluation or assessment of ongoing programs.

The concept of a "participatory evaluation methodology," used here, implies that **program implementors are actively involved** in all steps of the evaluation process. Participatory approaches are currently very popular in development programs but participation is only effective when the aim of the participation is clear and when a process to structure that participation is clearly defined. A participatory program evaluation must be carefully designed and coordinated by an **evaluation coordinator**. This can be an external consultant or someone from within the organization, depending upon where the required expertise can be found.

The involvement of **program stakeholders** (decision-makers and information-users) in the entire evaluation process is based on the assumption that this will contribute to greater relevance of the evaluation content and to greater accuracy in the evaluation findings. It is also based on the belief that program stakeholders can both contribute to the evaluation process and can learn from each other and from the methodological process itself.

While the methodology discussed in the manual is oriented toward a structured and comprehensive evaluation of an ongoing program, many of the concepts and techniques can be used both in end-of-project evaluations and in ongoing program monitoring activities.

The sequence of steps included in the methodology presented here have been successfully used in a number of different settings. However, this does not mean that the methodology is perfect. Each time the methodology has been used it has been modified based on the previous experiences. It is hoped that the core methodology will continue to evolve and be improved and that the innovations which you develop in your own evaluations will be shared with others.

Organization of the manual

This manual is intended to provide readers with practical guidelines for planning and conducting a participatory evaluation. For those who are planning to carry out a program evaluation it is suggested that you carefully read Chapters 1 through 4 before you start planning your own evaluation.

In Chapters 1 and 2 a number of concepts which underlie a participatory approach to evaluation are presented. An understanding of those concepts is important as a basis for the discussion of the practical steps in the evaluation process which are described in detail in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 includes conclusions regarding the use of a participatory methodology. Conducting a successful participatory evaluation is not an easy task. It depends upon careful planning and the availability of certain human and other resources. In Chapter 5 a series of caveats related to the use of the participatory methodology are enumerated. For those who want to read more about qualitative data collection and analysis, participatory training and evaluation, Chapter 6 includes a list of practical references which should be easily found in North America or Europe, though probably more difficult to obtain elsewhere in the world.

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* David Korten, development management specialist, developed the concepts of the **learning process approach** versus the **blueprint approach** to program implementation and evaluation. His original discussion of these concepts is in an article entitled "Community organization and

The Learning Process Approach to program implementation

The methodological approach to evaluation presented in this manual is profoundly influenced by the concept of a **"learning process approach"** to program implementation.* This approach differs significantly from the **"blueprint approach"** to program implementation which is the traditional and still most widely used approach. In the two approaches to program implementation, the orientation to program monitoring and evaluation is fundamentally different. It is important to understand the differences between the two and why this methodology is based on the learning process approach.

The Blueprint Approach

In the traditional "blueprint approach" to program planning, program objectives and activities are defined at the outset in a "blueprint" of how the program should be implemented. Based on the blueprint an implementation calendar is developed. The monitoring and evaluation of the plan consists primarily of determining the extent to which the activities and objectives are accomplished on time. Primarily **quantitative information** is collected in order to verify the number of activities and objectives accomplished. For example, information would be collected on the "number of health workers trained" and the "number of community meetings held" compared to the number planned. In this approach, there is no structured system for understanding why activities were accomplished or not, nor how they were carried out. Neither is there a system for providing feedback to the program plan in order to modify it in cases where changes could improve the functioning of the program. In addition, in this approach, program monitoring and evaluation is usually the responsibility of program managers and it allows them to report to their superiors on progress toward the blueprint goals.

The Learning Process Approach

An alternative approach to program planning and implementation, which has generally been found to be both more appropriate and effective in development programs, is the "learning process approach." In this approach, as in the blueprint approach, project objectives and activities are defined at the outset and an initial implementation calendar is developed. Monitoring and evaluation activities are concerned not only with the extent to which the planned activities are carried out but also with **how** they are being carried out. In this approach

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rural development: a learning process approach" which appeared in the Public Administration Review, vol. 40, pages 480-511, 1980. The concepts are also discussed in a book entitled, Bureaucracy and the Poor: Closing the Gap, David Korten and Felipe Alfonso, Kumarian Press, West Hartford, 1983.

mechanisms are developed to help program staff to learn from both the successes and problems encountered in implementing the activities in order to improve the program in the future. For example, in a monitoring or evaluation activity it would be important to know not only how many community meetings were held but also to identify both the successful and problematic aspects of those meetings. This would allow program staff to identify ways to improve future meetings. In this approach, monitoring and evaluation activities involve the collection of important **quantitative information** but priority is given to the collection of **qualitative information** which describes the process involved in carrying out each type of activity. For example, information might be collected on the "number of health workers trained" but also on the "quality of the training materials," on the "feed-back from the trainees" regarding the training content and on "how the trainees are using what they learned" in their work with communities.

Based upon the information collected, **"lessons learned"** are formulated which are fed back into the program plan. Modifications in program activities and strategies can continuously be made based upon the lessons learned which are formulated during the entire period of program implementation. In this approach, not only program managers but all levels of program staff are involved in program monitoring and evaluation. Program field staff have a particularly important role to play in providing their observations regarding the activities being implemented and their suggestions of how to improve them. Lessons which are developed by program staff can help program managers make better decisions about how to adjust the program strategy, activities and budget.

The chart below summarizes some of the key differences between the "blueprint" & "learning process" approaches to program evaluation related to: the purpose of the evaluation; the scope of the data collection; data collection methods used; and responsibility for data collection.

"Blueprint" and "Learning Process" approaches to program evaluation

	"Bluerint" approach	*"Learning Process" approach*
Purpose of evaluation	-to measure progress relative to program "blueprint"	-to measure quanitative achievements -to develop lessons learned to be integrated into program plan
Scope of data collection	-limited no. of variables related to blueprint targets	-holistic -additional dimensions, questions emerge in the iterative learning process
Data collection methods	-quantitative -objective assessment	-qualitative and quantitative -"subjective" judgement
Responsibility for data collection	-external evaluators and/or program managers	-program stakeholders (program managers and progam implementors)

As stated above, the evaluation methodology presented in this manual is based upon a "learning process approach" to program implementation. The practical implications of this approach will be spelled out in the following pages. Perhaps the two most important facets of the approach in the methodology are the **involvement of program stakeholders** in all steps in the evaluation process and the focus of the evaluation on the **development of lessons learned** which are translated into an **action plan**.

Glossary of terms

In this manual, a number of terms are used which may not be entirely familiar to the reader. These terms are defined here. As you come across them in the text, you may want to refer back to this glossary.

Blueprint approach (to evaluation): An approach to evaluation which measures program accomplishments against program objectives defined in original program "blueprint".

Closed questions: Questions which elicit a short, often yes or no, response. These questions do not usually require the respondant to think at length before answering.

Content analysis: The basic approach to data analysis in qualitative research. In this approach the responses of an individual or a group are organized according to the categories identified in the responses themselves through a sort of discovery process.

Data collection: The collection of quantitative and/or qualitative information through the use of various techniques.

Double-barreled questions: Questions which ask two different things at the same time. For example, "What do you think about the training and supervision you received?" Such questions should be avoided in interviewing.

Evaluation questions: The questions which orient and provide a focus for the evaluation process. These are not the same as "interview questions". In other evaluation manuals these are often referred to as "evaluation objectives."

Impact evaluation: A type of program evaluation which aims to determine if there have been changes in the target group members as a result of the program. In health and nutrition programs, impact evaluations usually measure changes in morbidity(illness), mortality (deaths) and/or nutritional status.

Interview questions: The actual questions asked of interviewees during either individual or group interviews.

Iterative process: A cyclical process in which experience or knowledge is aquired, reviewed, modified, applied, etc., in an ongoing fashion.

Leading questions: Questions which are formulated in such a way that they suggest the type of answer sought. For example, the question, "Would you agree that the training was well done?" suggests to the respondant that he/she should answer affirmatively.

Learning Process Approach (to evaluation): An approach to evaluation which focuses on developing lessons for future program implementation based on the analysis of program accomplishments and constraints.

Lessons learned: Based on both accomplishments and difficulties in program implementation identified in a program evaluation, lessons which are developed to improve the program in the future.

Methodology: A series of defined steps which are followed in carrying out a given task, for example, a program planning methodology or a program evaluation methodology.

Monitoring: Systematic and ongoing documentation and analysis of the program activities with the goal of improving how the activities are being implemented.

Objective perspective: The perspective of someone who is outside of the community or institution and who has a relatively unbiased view of community or institutional values, problems, needs, etc.

Open-ended questions: Questions which elicit in-depth, detailed responses from interviewees. This type of question is extensively used in qualitative data collection.

Outcome evaluation: A type of program evaluation which aims to assess program achievements compared to planned objectives and activities. This type of evaluation focuses, in quantitative terms, on how many objectives and activities were accomplished.

Probing questions: Following a respondant's answer, follow-up questions which are used to elicit additional or more detailed information relative to the original answer.

Process evaluation: A type of program evaluation which is concerned with how program activities were implemented, primarily in qualitative terms. It can, however, also include the collection of quantitative information. Process evaluations seek to determine what approaches were used, what problems were encountered, what strategies were successful and why.

Program evaluation: The analysis of underlying program concepts and of the implementation of program activities in order to determine how to improve program effectiveness. Evaluations can be carried out during or following a program.

Purposeful sampling: The selection of a sample of people/interviewees who have certain characteristics or knowledge of interest to the researcher or evaluator.

Qualitative data collection: The collection of in-depth, subjective information which reflects "insiders" attitudes, values or priorities regarding topics of interest. Results consist of descriptive information which explains patterns or trends in beliefs, attitudes, etc.

Quantitative data collection: The collection of succinct, objective information on various predetermined variables or factors in order to determine their frequency or magnitude. Results are presented as numbers or percentages.

Random sampling: The selection of a sample of people/interviewees who are representative of the whole population. Data collection from a random sample of people allows the researcher to generalize the study findings to the entire population.

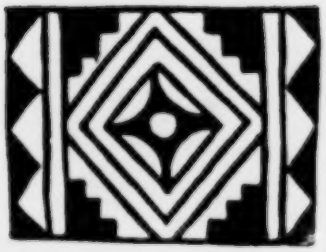
RAP (Rapid Assessment Procedures): The use of primarily qualitative, semi-structured data collection techniques to collect information in a short period of time on community knowledge and practices related to health and nutrition. The approach was developed by anthropologists working in public health programs. It is similar to RRA although RAP are used specificially in health. and nutrition.

RRA (Rapid Rural Appraisal): An approach to collecting information at the community level which involves the use of a variety of data collection techniques intended to help program implementors rapidly and progressively learn about community knowledge and practices. The approach was developed in the fields of agriculture and rural development in the 1980's. PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) is a more recent development, based on the RRA approach, in which community members assume primary responsibility for collecting and analyzing information.

Secondary data source: Information which is collected from an existing source such as reports, registers, files, etc. This is in contrast to information which is collected directly through interviews, observations, etc.

Stakeholders: Persons who have a stake in an evaluation and who will potentially use the evaluation findings to make decisions regarding program strategies and/or implementation.

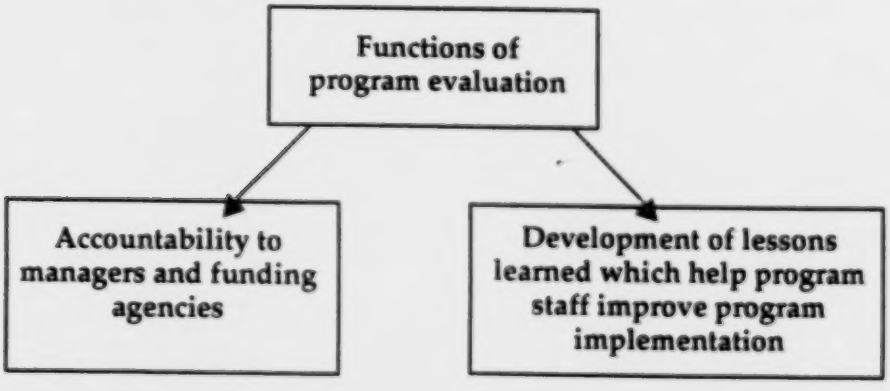
Subjective perspective: The perspective of someone who is inside the community or institution and whose view of values, problems and needs is influenced or biased by the fact that he/she belongs to the community or institution.



Why a Participatory Methodology? 2

In most development programs, periodic evaluations are included in program plans. Most program managers agree that evaluations are both necessary and important to help them make good decisions regarding how program strategies can be strengthened. However, evaluations often do not respond to their expectations. Often sophisticated evaluation methods are used which mystify the evaluation process and alienate program staff. A widespread problem is the underutilization of evaluation results.

Program evaluations should fufill two important functions. First, evaluation results should provide information to program managers and funding agencies regarding how resources have been used, whether program objectives have been met and if planned activities have been carried out. Secondly, an evaluation should lead to the development of lessons which will help program staff improve program implementation in the future. Many evaluations provide information for accountability purposes but do not generate lessons for the future.


Functions of program evaluation
Accountability to managers and funding agencies
Development of lessons learned which help program staff improve program implementation

There are a multitude of ways that a program evaluation can be carried out. Program managers must choose the approach which best fits their needs. Choosing the most appropriate evaluation methodology involves consideration of several key issues.

Is an outcome evaluation or a process evaluation required?

Who should be involved in conducting the evaluation?

Should the priority be to identify problems or to develop lessons which can be applied in the future?

Let us look at some of the differences between how these three questions are answered in a traditional approach to evaluation and in a participatory approach.

Outcome evaluation or process evaluation?

Outcome evaluation

The need for program evaluation originally grew out of the demands of funding agencies for **accountability** on the part of program implementors. Evaluations have traditionally focused on assessing the quantifiable outcomes of program implementation (for example, the number of training sessions conducted, or the number of latrines built). **Outcome evaluations** are widely used primarily to investigate how many of the planned activities were or were not carried out. However, program managers and funding agencies alike have increasingly realized, in keeping with a learning process perspective, that it is not sufficient to know only the numbers of activities carried out. There is increasing concern that evaluations should also reveal, in qualitative terms, the successes and problems encountered in the implementation process.

Just because you can quantify something doesn't mean you understand it.

Process evaluation

In contrast to outcome evaluation, **process evaluation** focuses on the program implementation process in order to formulate conclusions about how things were

done and how they can be improved. For example, how were the various activities carried out? What problems were encountered in conducting the training sessions and how were they overcome? What are the perceptions of both field staff and community members regarding latrine usage? In a process evaluation, quantitative information can be collected on the numbers of activities carried out but the emphasis is on qualitative information.

Program managers must decide whether they want to carry out an outcome evaluation, a process evaluation or both. The evaluation methodology presented in this manual is for conducting a process evaluation of a program. The proposed methodology is intended to produce results which respond to the information needs of program managers, funders and field staff regarding the implementation of a project or program.

Who should be involved in conducting the evaluation?

The traditional approach

In the **traditional approach** to program evaluation, one or more outside evaluators are given full responsibility for conducting the evaluation including: defining evaluation objectives; designing the evaluation methodology; collecting and analyzing information; and formulating their own conclusions and recommendations about the program. Some evaluation experts argue that the use of outside evaluators assures that the evaluation will be "objective."

In many cases, however, when responsibility for program evaluation is delegated to outside evaluation "specialists" they adopt a top-down, doctor-patient relationship with program staff. Often program staff are excluded from the process and the secrecy can create feelings of suspicion and stress on their part. The use of sophisticated data collection and analysis techniques can reinforce the idea that the program must depend on an evaluation expert to carry out the exercise. Frequently evaluation results are not easily understood by program personnel nor readily applicable to their work. All of these factors can contribute to program staff's disinterest and even alienation from an evaluation activity.

In more traditional approaches to evaluation, evaluation "experts" often reject the involvement of program staff in evaluations of their own programs. Unfortunately, in many cases where responsibility has been delegated to experts to define the orientation of an evaluation, program staff often resent being excluded and as a result often discredit or ignore "the evaluators' findings and recommendations."

The participatory approach

In a **participatory approach** to program evaluation, an evaluation coordinator, usually from outside of the organization, works in partnership **with** program "stakeholders" in all phases of the evaluation process. Program stakeholders are those individuals who have a stake in how the evaluation comes out. They are persons who will later make decisions and use the information generated by the evaluation. In a participatory approach the evaluation coordinator collaborates with program "stakeholders" to define the evaluation objectives, to develop the evaluation methodology, to collect and interpret information and to develop conclusions and recommendations.

In this approach, the evaluation coordinator's role is not only to structure and facilitate each step in the evaluation process but also to contribute as a full member of the evaluation team. The role of the stakeholders is: to share their experiences working with the program; to participate in collecting additional information about program implementation; to work with the evaluation team to analyze both the data collected and the experiences described in order to formulate conclusions about the program strategy and outcomes. The methodology assumes that the quality of the evaluation results will be improved if the process elicits the **subjective** perspective of program implementors along with the more **objective** perspective of the outside evaluation consultant.

A participatory evaluation is based on the assumption that the stakeholders' involvement will help ensure that the evaluation addresses the issues which are of concern to them and will increase their sense of ownership over the evaluation results. It also appears that stakeholder involvement leads to greater use of the evaluation results by program decision-makers and implementors. The participatory approach provides a learning experience for the program stakeholders who are involved. It is an opportunity for them to reinforce their skills in program evaluation and to increase their understanding of the program strategy, its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the participatory evaluation process can contribute to improved communication between program staff who are at different levels of program implementation.

For each evaluation exercise, program managers must decide whether the participatory approach, with active stakeholder involvement, is appropriate or not. If a participatory approach is chosen, this manual will help the program manager to plan and carry out the evaluation.

Focus on implementation problems or on lessons learned?

Identifying problems

Traditionally most evaluations have focused on identifying **inadequacies and weaknesses** in program implementation. Given the nature of development programs, there are always inadequacies and weaknesses. An evaluation which dissects and then reports on such problems is of some value, however, it usually leaves program staff feeling discouraged and it may not help them to know what to do next to improve program implementation.

Developing lessons learned

The participatory evaluation methodology described in this manual includes the identification of implementation problems but emphasizes the development of **lessons learned** based both on the problematic and successful aspects of the program implementation process. From beginning to end, the evaluation methodology addresses the question "What can we learn from what we have already accomplished in order to improve the program in the future?"

Principles of participatory evaluation

1. The involvement of program implementors in the evaluation process can be of great value given their experience with the program.

2. The primary focus of program evaluation should not be on identifying problems and inadequacies but rather on formulating lessons learned for use in the future.

3. The participatory evaluation process can contribute to improved communication between program staff at different levels of program implementation.

Steps in the Methodology 3

The participatory evaluation methodology consists of six **phases**, each consisting of several **steps**.

Phases of the methodology

Phase I: Pre-planning meetings

Phase II: Evaluation planning workshop

Phase III: Field data collection and analysis

Phase IV: Workshop to formulate lessons learned

Phase V: Development of action plan

Phase VI: Finalization and dissemination of the evaluation report

The entire process is summarized in the table on the following page. Although the steps in the methodology are presented as a sequence from 1 to 19, in some cases the implementation of the steps resembles a spiral more than a straight line. For example, in Step 3 the logistical planning begins but it cannot be completed until Step 9 when the sample of interviewees is finalized.

Table 1: Steps in the participatory evaluation process

Phase I: **Pre-planning meetings** (Evaluation Coordinating Group)	Step 1: Step 2: Step 3: Step 4:	Define evaluation goal & objectives Identify Evaluation Team members Plan logistical and administrative arrangements Develop visual framework of the project
Phase II: **Evaluation planning workshop** (Evaluation Team)	Step 5: Step 6: Step 7: Step 8: Step 9:	Organize stakeholders into a working group Develop evaluation questions Identify data collection techniques Develop data collection instruments Finalize sample of data collection sites and interviewees
Phase III: **Field data collection and analysis** (Fieldwork Teams)	Step 10: Step 11: Step 12: Step 13:	Orient fieldwork teams Conduct interviews and observations Analyze information collected Summarize fieldwork findings
Phase IV: **Workshop to formulate lessons learned** (Evaluation Team)	Step 14: Step 15: Step 16:	Formulate lessons learned for each evaluation question Team assessment of the evaluation process Summarize lessons learned
Phase V: **Development of action plan** (Key program stakeholders)	Step 17:	Develop action plan based on evaluation findings
Phase VI: **Finalization and dissemination of evaluation report** (Evaluation Coordinator and Evaluation Coordinating Group)	Step 18: Step 19:	Write evaluation report Distribute and discuss evaluation results with project collaborators

There are a number of different individuals and groups who are involved in the evaluation process. The composition and the roles of each are summarized here.

Evaluation Coordinating Group: A small group (2-5 persons) which ensures the overall coordination of the evaluation from beginning to end. In Phase I they are responsible for all of the initial logistical and methodological planning. During Phase II they should assist with all logistical arrangements and materials. During the fieldwork, Phase III, they serve as team coordinators for the data collection and analysis. In Phases IV-VI they should provide support as needed.

Evaluation Team: This refers to the comprehensive group of program stakeholders who are actively involved in Phase II to develop the evaluation methodology, and Phase IV to study the evaluation findings and to develop the lessons learned. The team will probably consist of between 10 and 15 people. In cases where the evaluation team is relatively small (10-12 people), it may be possible for all of them to participate as fieldwork team members. Where the evaluation team is larger, not all of them will be involved in Phase III fieldwork.

Fieldwork Teams: One or more teams of stakeholders who are responsible for collecting and analyzing data collected during fieldwork interviews and observations. They are a sub-group of the Evaluation Team members.

Evaluation Coordinator: Someone who has experience in qualitative evaluation methods, in group process and in participatory training, who designs and has primary responsibility for facilitating all steps in the evaluation process.

In this chapter each of the steps in the methodology will be described and illustrated with examples from a participatory evaluation of a community nutrition project carried out in The Gambia in West Africa in 1992. The project evaluated, the Nutrition Education Pilot Campaign (NEPC), was implemented by the Gambian Food and Nutrition Association (GAFNA), a non-governmental organization. GAFNA is the CRS counterpart in a Title II Health and Nutrition Program.

Phase I: Pre-planning Meetings

In the first phase of the evaluation process, the evaluation coordinator meets with the project managers and other persons who will be involved in the coordination of the entire evaluation activity. Through a series of meetings the **Evaluation Coordinating Group** is responsible for dealing with the first four steps in the process.

Phase I: Pre-planning Meetings

Step 1: Define evaluation goal & objectives

Step 2: Identify evaluation team members (stakeholders)

Step 3: Plan logistical and administrative arrangements

Step 4: Develop visual framework of the project

Step 1: Define evaluation goal and objectives

The initial step in the evaluation process is to define the goal and objectives of the evaluation. It is important that the managers of the program to be evaluated be involved in this task to ensure that the goal and objectives meet their expectations.

One broad goal should be defined which reflects the overall aim of the evaluation. The wording of the goal should be concise and simple so that all who read it will clearly understand the purpose of the evaluation. In the Gambian evaluation, the Coordinating Group defined the goal of the evaluation as: *to assess the nutrition education strategy and accomplishments in order to develop lessons learned for future community nutrition education activities and to develop a nutrition education action plan.*

Based on the evaluation goal, several evaluation objectives should be formulated which define the main expectations of the evaluation. The objectives can address both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the program, learning objectives for participants, and the evaluation process itself. In the GAFNA evaluation 4 broad objectives were defined.

The GAFNA Experience

GAFNA Evaluation Objectives

1. to assess the appropriateness of the nutrition education strategy

2. to identify the accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the nutrition education project activities

3. to reinforce the knowledge and skills of project implementors and collaborators in conducting participatory program evaluations

4. to assess the usefulness of the participatory evaluation methodology for evaluating community-based health and nutrition interventions

The expectation that an evaluation constitute both a "learning process" and a "staff development" exercise is clearly reflected in the GAFNA evaluation goal and objectives. In Step 6, based upon the evaluation objectives defined here, the specific questions which the evaluation should answer will be defined.

Step 2: Identify evaluation team members

Determination of the composition of the evaluation team should be based first, upon the skills required to plan and conduct the evaluation and, secondly, upon program managers' staff development priorities. Four types of knowledge and skills should be represented on the team: 1) in-depth experience with the program to be evaluated; 2) experience with qualitative data collection methods; 3) team-building and group facilitation skills; 4) skills in planning and managing logistical arrangements for field activities. If the evaluation is viewed as a staff development exercise, program staff involved at different levels of the program should be included on the evaluation team.

Table 2, shown on the following page, summarizes the types of knowledge and skills required amongst the team members, and their respective responsibilities. Team members should include: program managers; program field staff; a logistics coordinator; and the evaluation coordinator. In addition to these team members, in some cases it will be appropriate to include other

persons who have collaborated with program staff to some extent, although they may not have been involved in all phases of program implementation, for example, Ministry of Health or Ministry of Agriculture staff.

Table 2: Composition and Responsibilities of the EvaluationTeam

Knowledge/skills required	Who is responsible?	Responsibilities
In-depth experience with the program to be evaluated.	Program managers Program field staff	• define evaluation questions • participate in data collection & analysis • participate in report writing
Experience with process evaluations and qualitative data collection methods	Evaluation coordinator	• plan & coordinate evaluation methodology • participate in and supervise data collection & analysis • coordinate report writing
Team-building and group facilitation skills during planning and fieldwork phases	Evaluation coordinator Program staff members	• develop spirit of collaboration and sharing amongst team members • facilitate group planning and data analysis sessions
Planning & managing logistical arrangements for field activities & material resources for the study	Program staff member (logistics coordinator)	• prepare budget for training and field work & report production • arrange logistical aspects of field work • procure materials necessary for the evaluation

Program managers

Program managers have an in-depth understanding of the program and its priorities. To assure that the results of the evaluation correspond with their information needs, program managers should be members of the evaluation team. Ideally, all team menbers including the program managers, should participate in all phases of evaluation planning and implementation. In the case of program managers, however, it may be impossible for them to

participate as full-time team members. Nevertheless, they should be involved in the process as much as possible so that they assume *ownership* of the evaluation. This will increase the likelihood that they will use the results of the evaluation.

Program field staff

The evaluation team should also include program field staff who have been directly involved in implementing program activities. The special knowledge which such individuals can contribute to the evaluation is an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of the day-to-day implementation of the program which program managers usually do not have. Their subjective insights will be invaluable to the team as the assessment of the program proceeds. Their perspective will also be critical to the development of lessons learned for the future.

Evaluation coordinator

The team should include an "evaluation coordinator" who has experience both planning and conducting process evaluations, and with qualitative data collection methods. In addition, he/she must be committed to involving program staff in the evaluation process and have skills in team-building and group facilitation. Not all evaluation consultants either believe in a participatory approach to evaluation nor have the skills to involve staff in all steps in the process. It is suggested that such an individual be referred to as the"coordinator" rather than the "evaluator," or some other term which suggests his/her superior status on the team.

The "evaluation coordinator" is responsible for coordinating all of the methodological aspects of the study, participating directly in the data collection, supervising the other team members, facilitating the analysis of the data, and coordinating the writing of the final report.

Logistics Coordinator

One or more program staff members should be chosen to coordinate the logistical arrangements for both the preparatory and field work phases. This requires someone who knows how to systematically plan activities, to estimate the resources required for each activity, and to assure that the necessary resources are available at the correct time and place. The logistics coordinator should be actively involved in the initial planning meetings to assure that he/she has a good grasp of the logistical requirements for Phases II through VI.

The GAFNA Experience

GAFNA Evaluation Team members

The Evaluation Team members included individuals who had been involved with program implementation at different levels and other key program collaborators. A group of 22 people was identified, composed of:

- GAFNA central and provincial project staff
- Health education and nutrition staff from the Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Agriculture field staff
- Community health nurses
- CRS Program Manager
- Evaluation coordinator

Step 3: Plan logistical and administrative arrangements

The success of any evaluation depends in part on advanced and careful logistical and administrative planning. It is important to avoid the error of focusing on preparing the methodological aspects of an evaluation and giving insufficient attention to the importance of the logistical and administrative arrangements.

Planning and supervising all of the logistical arrangements is time-consuming. As much as posssible the program manager should delegate these tasks to support staff so that the manager is not distracted from participating fully in the methodological aspects of Phases I through V.

At this point in the evaluation process, the logistics coordinator should be identified and begin the logistical and administrative planning. This planning will progressively be completed until the field work schedule is finalized in Step 10.

The logistical and administrative planning includes: choice of data collection sites; determination of number of fieldwork teams and members of each; choice of fieldwork team leaders; preparation of a budget for all materials and field work expenses; purchase of materials for the training, field work, report writing and duplication; planning lodging and meal locations for field work period; arrangements for vehicles, drivers and petrol; administrative procedures to inform provincial level authorities of the activity and to elicit their collaboration. The logistical coordinator may accompany one of the field

teams during the field work, and/or delegate this responsibility to one person on each of the other teams, to ensure all logistical arrangements.

A useful tool for scheduling these practical aspects of the evaluation is an "Evaluation Activity Schedule." Such a schedule can be developed in chart form by listing all of the specific activities or tasks which must be carried out during the 6 phases of the evaluation. In another column the material resources required for each activity can be listed, followed by the date by which the task must be completed.

Evaluation Activity Schedule

Tasks	Resources needed	Completion date

Given the need to begin planning for the fieldwork as early as possible, at this stage there should be preliminary discussion of the regions and sites at which data collection will be carried out. This will allow the logistics coordinator to proceed with the planning for the fieldwork period. Details of the field data collection will be determined progressively and finalized in steps 7, 9 and 10.

An important tool for the determination of the fieldwork sites is a map which includes all of the potential data collection areas. The evaluation coordinating group should define the criteria for the choice of data collection zones and sites based upon three types of considerations: programmatic; methodological; and logistical.

Programmatic considerations which might influence the choice of data collection sites could be, for example, the location of the program activities, or the fact that the same activities were not carried out at all program sites. The **methodological considerations** are related mainly to the nature of sampling in qualitative studies, i.e. purposeful sampling (discussed below). **Logistical considerations** that would influence the choice of the data collection sights are numerous: the number of fieldwork teams; the distance and time to and between potential data collection sites; climatic and road conditions; the time available for the fieldwork portion of the evaluation exercise. Sites which are the farthest away and the most difficult and time-consuming to get to should not be systematically eliminated from the sample. In many evaluations there is a tendency to exclude sites which are further from the capital city, further from the tarmac and with poorer roads. This bias should be avoided as much as possible.

Obviously the availability of human and material resources for the evaluation will influence the sample size and the choice of interview sites. The availability of the various team members and of the financial resources

necessary to ensure their involvement in the study will determine the length of time the evaluation can last, the number of sites that can be visited and the number of interviews that can be conducted.

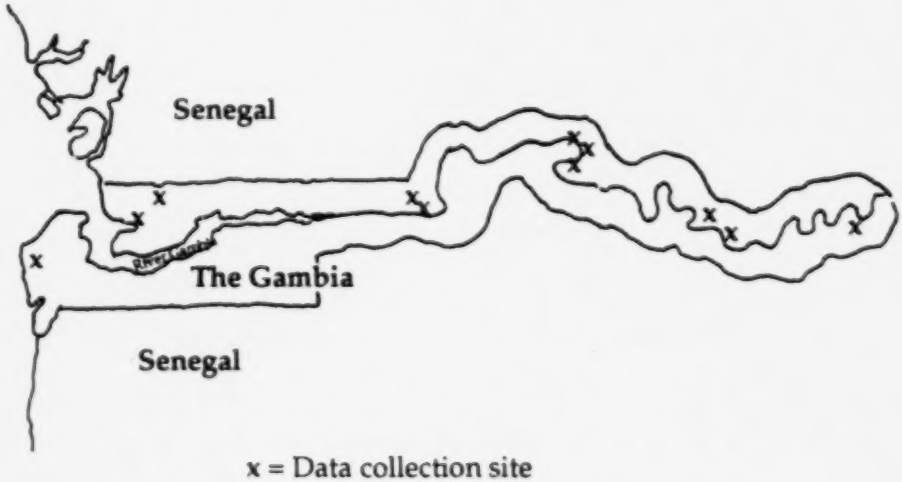
The purposeful sample

As stated earlier, in a process evaluation, data collection is primarly qualitative. An important methodological consideration is therefore the nature of sampling in qualitative data collection. In a qualitative evaluation the data collection sites do not need to be randomly chosen as in a quantitative study. Rather, a **purposeful sample** is chosen. The choice of a purposeful sample involves first defining the characteristics of the sites or type of persons to be interviewed. Based upon these characteristics, any sites or persons having those characteristics can be included in the sample.

The determination of the data collection sites can be a time-consuming process given the variety of considerations that must be taken into consideration. The proposal will probably be revised several times before it is finalized. It is helpful to make a simple map on flipchart paper on which the data collection sites can be plotted.

The GAFNA Experience

Evaluation Data Collection Sites



x = Data collection site

Step 4: Develop visual framework of the program/project

The evaluation team members need to have a common understanding of the aspects or elements of the initial program or project strategy to be examined in the evaluation. In this step the Evaluation Coordinating Group develops a visual project framework, usually in the form of a table, which defines the scope of the evaluation. The involvement of program managers in this task is of critical importance to ensure that the elements which are included and excluded from the framework reflect program managers' priorities.

The framework should contain the program or project **goal**, **objectives** and **activities** included in the strategy. In addition, it should include the underlying **concepts** or **assumptions** adopted in the program strategy such as "community management of project activities" or "participatory training methodologies."

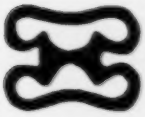
The development of the framework serves several purposes. It requires the coordinating group to clarify the initial program strategy and components and, as such, is a first step toward defining the scope of the evaluation. The available project documents should be used to prepare the table. The preparation of the framework involves a decision-making process to decide what should and should not be included in the framework and hence, in the evaluation. The framework will be an important tool for communicating with the other evaluation team members who will need to have a common understanding of the scope of the evaluation. The framework should be copied onto flipchart paper and/or photocopied so that during Phases II and IV the expanded evaluation team will have easy access to it.

The development of the framework turned out to be a time-consuming task. Although many project documents existed, some elements of the strategy were not written down and had to be reconstituted by those members of the Evaluation Coordinating Group who had been involved since the outset of the project. A portion of the framework developed by the group is presented in Table 3, "Nutrition Education Pilot Campaign Project Framework."

One day may be required to develop the framework depending upon whether all of the necessary elements are available to the group in writing.

Table 3: A portion of the NEPC project framework

Goal and objectives	Project strategy
Goal: to design and disseminate appropriate nutrition education messages as part of maternal and child nutrition intervention strategies Objectives: to investigate the effectiveness of different communication methods for the dissemination of nutrition education to promote a positive change in mothers' knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding the nutrition of pregnant and lactating mothers and young children through the diffusion of three messages to familiarize Community Health Nurses and village-based traditional communicators with common problems related to maternal and child feeding practices and possible solutions	Concept: Interactive participatory education methods contribute to greater learning Activities: - group discussions, role plays and cooking demonstrations conducted by Community Health Nurses - songs and group discussions conducted by traditional communicators - combined approach of activities conducted by traditional communicators and Community Health Nurses Concepts: - Nutrition education content should take into account cultural beliefs and practices. - Nutrition education strategy should promote changes in individual knowledge and practices Activities: - conduct a review of available studies on infant feeding and maternal nutrition - identify three priority nutrition messages - develop three posters - develop a nutrition education manual for Community Health Nurses - conduct baseline survey in pilot villages in three regions



Phase II: Evaluation Planning Workshop

The second phase in the participatory evaluation methodology consists of the "Evaluation Planning Workshop" in which all of the Evaluation Team members who were identified in Step 2 participate. During the workshop the team members are first introduced to the basic concepts of participatory program evaluation. Then they are involved in actually developing the methodology to be used in the evaluation. The workshop should be a minimum of 4 days and preferably 5. Steps 5 through 9 are addressed in this phase.

Phase II: Evaluation Planning Workshop

Step 5: Organize stakeholders into a working group

Step 6: Develop evaluation questions

Step 7: Identify data collection sources & techniques

Step 8: Develop data collection instruments

Step 9: Finalize sample of data collection sites and interviewees

The initial workshop must be carefully planned, based upon clear workshop objectives. Several days before the workshop begins, the evaluation coordinator should draft a set of objectives which should be discussed and revised as necessary with the program manager and/or Evaluation Coordinating Group members.

The GAFNA Experience

Evaluation planning workshop objectives

General objective:

to involve project stakeholders in developing the evaluation methodology

Specific objectives:

1. to define three main types of program evaluation
2. to define the function of evaluation in a "learning process" approach to program implementation and evaluation
3. to define the concept of participatory evaluation
4. to identify the steps in a participatory evaluation
5. to identify the main differences between quantitative and qualitative data collection
6. to describe 5 qualitative data collection techniques which can be used in health and nutrition projects
7. to define the evaluation questions for the NEPC
8. to identify from whom/what source information should be collected for each evaluation objective
9. to identify the most appropriate data collection techniques for each evaluation objective
10. to develop data collection instruments

Based upon the training objectives, detailed written training designs must be developed for each of the sessions. This task is primarily the responsibility of the Evaluation Coordinator, who should be experienced in designing participatory training, although other Evaluation Coordinating Group members or experienced trainers/adult educators may also be involved. The workshop sessions should be highly participative but at the same time carefully structured so that the necessary tasks are accomplished as planned.

Table 3, on the following page, shows the GAFNA workshop schedule. The full team participated in the first 3 days of the workshop; the last day involved only the field team members.

Schedule for Evaluation Planning Workshop

The GAFNA Experience

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
8:30 - 12:30 Introduction Presentations Workshop goals and objectives Concepts of program evaluation 3 types of evaluations Learning process approach to program implementation and evaluation	Nutrition education project framework Developing evaluation questions	Developing data collection instruments	Verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors Principles and steps of in-depth interviewing Types of questions
14:00 - 16:30 Participatory evaluation Overview of RRA, PRA, and RAP Qualitative and quantitative methods Steps in participatory evaluation	Defining data collection sources and techniques	Developing data collection instruments	Active listening: exercise in small groups Principles of note-taking

Step 5: Organize project stakeholders into an effective team

The evaluation team members have been identified and the expectation is that they will work together to carry out the various tasks associated with the evaluation. However, teams of people do not necessarily work effectively together. An initial step in Phase II is to begin to develop a sense of team membership and mission. The evaluation coordinator is responsible for designing and facilitating a series of team-building exercises at this stage in the evaluation process. However, an ongoing effort must be made during the entire evaluation process to encourage a spirit of openness and collaboration between the team members.

A series of workshop exercises used in this step prepare team members to carry out the tasks expected of them. The participants should be introduced to the concept of participatory evaluation and to the role of each individual on the evaluation team. The rationale for the involvement of all levels of program implementors in the evaluation process in terms of what they can both contribute and learn should be discussed. The notion that the evaluation is a "learning process" in which the contribution of all team members is important in generating lessons for future programs should also be stressed.

"Demystifying evaluation" or "Why am I here?"

At the outset of the workshop, many of the participants felt uneasy and unclear about their role on the evaluation team. They assumed that in the evaluation outside "experts" would be scrutinizing their work and didn't understand what their role could possibly be. In the workshop, special effort was made to demystify the concept of "program evaluation" and to convince the participants that they each had an important role to play in the process. By the end of the second day, it was clear to all of the participants what was expected of the team and of each team member.

Other concepts related to program evaluation which the participants need to understand in order to develop the evaluation methodology include: the different types of program evaluation; basic concepts and methods in RRA, RAP and PRA as contrasted with traditional approaches to data collection; and the steps in the participatory evaluation methodology.

Step 6: Develop evaluation questions

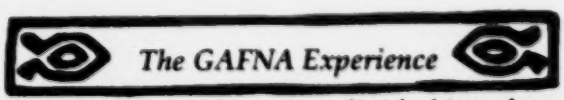
Based upon the background concepts of program evaluation presented to the evaluation team members in Step 4, here they will begin developing their own evaluation plan. In this step the question to be answered is: *What do you want to find out?* The involvement of the project stakeholders in this task is important for several reasons:

1) to ensure that the evaluation responds to the concerns of program managers and field staff;

2) to promote program stakeholder's sense of ownership of the evaluation; and

3) to provide the evaluation coordinator with a clear understanding of staff priorities for the evaluation.

A preliminary step in this task is the presentation of the project framework (developed in Step 4). The coordinator must be sure that the elements of the framework are understood by all team members. Once this is accomplished, the team members should be divided into small groups of 3-6 persons to develop the evaluation questions. Each group can be assigned to work on one portion of the framework. For example, one group could work on the project "nutrition education" activities while another could deal with the activities carried out with "mothers' management committees."



The GAFNA Experience

The program stakeholders were divided into four groups corresponding to the four components of the project framework:

1) project management and monitoring;

2) nutrition messages and materials;

3) nutrition education sessions at the community level;

4) training.

The task of each of the groups is to define specifically what information should be collected on their aspect of the program. For example, in terms of the training activities, what is important to find out in the evaluation, both quantitatively and qualitatively, regarding how those activities were carried out. The evaluation questions developed by each group should be recorded in a Data Collection Planning Chart (see page 36). It is important that each

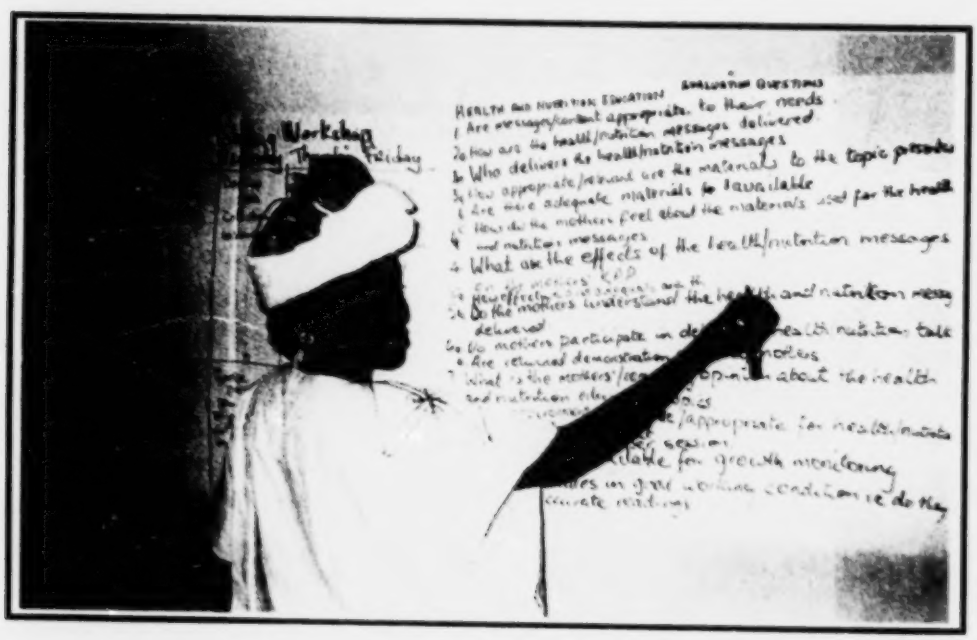
The GAFNA Experience

Examples of evaluation questions:

Project management & monitoring: *Was there a system in place to address problems/constraints between all project actors?*

Training: *For each training event was a training plan developed and a report of the activity written?*

It is important to point out that the "evaluation questions" define the information which the evaluation seeks to collect. However, the formulation of these questions is not necessarily that which will be used in actually interviewing program collaborators. In Step 8, when the interview guides are written, the actual "interview questions" to be asked will be developed.


Workshop
HEALTH AND NUTRITION EDUCATION
EVALUATION QUESTIONS
1 Are messages/content appropriate to their needs
2a How are the health/nutrition messages delivered
b Who delivers the health/nutrition messages
3 How appropriate/relevant are the materials to the topic presente
4 Are more adequate materials be available
5 How do the mothers feel about the materials used for the health
and nutrition messages
6 What are the effects of the health/nutrition messages
delivered
7a Do the mothers participate in
b Are returned demonstration
c What is the mothers' reaction about the health
and nutrition
available for growth monitoring

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Step 7: Identify data collection sources and techniques

Once the evaluation questions are defined, the team must decide:

1) whether the required information is quantitative and/or qualitative;
2) from whom or what source the information should be collected;
3) what data collection techniques would be most appropriate.

Each of these decisions must be made based on the evaluation questions developed in Step 6.

In a process evaluation such as this, data collection is primarily **qualitative.** As an introduction to this step, the characteristics of a qualitative approach to data collection, as contrasted with a quantitative approach, should be presented to the team. The differences should be explained in terms of: sample size; sample type; data collection techniques; approach to data analysis; and the relationship between interviewer and interviewees.

Contrasting characteristics of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods

Quantitative methods	Qualitative methods
Sample size:	
• large sample	• small sample
Type of sample:	
• random sample	• purposeful sample
Data collection technique:	
• individually administered questionnaire	• individual or group interview, observation
Data analysis:	
• information collected is classified according to predetermined categories	• information collected is classified according to the categories of responses which are identified in the data itself
Relationship between interviewer & interviewees:	
• formal, structured, distant	• less formal, semi-structured, attempt to get as close to the community as possible

In evaluations of community programs, numerous data collection techniques can be used. In the RAP, RRA, and PRA methodologies developed in the last several years, more than 20 different data collection techniques have been experimented with. Many of them can potentially be used in program evaluations. (See additional references in Chapter 6.) In this manual, however, only 5 techniques will be discussed, those which are more frequently used in program evaluations, namely: in-depth individual interviews; group interviews; key informant interviews; observations; and secondary data sources. These techniques can be used to collect information both at the community and institutional levels. In the workshop, each of the techniques should be described. Participants can be asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses, and possible uses of each.

Key data collection techniques

In-depth individual interview: A semi-structured interview using a flexible interview guide consisting of mainly open-ended questions. The aim is to collect detailed information on the individual's opinions, beliefs and aspirations.

Key informant interview (a special type of individual interview): A "key informant" is someone who has extensive experience and knowledge on a topic of interest to the evaluation. At the community level, often key informants are community leaders. The interviewer must develop a relationship of confidence with the informant before he/she will share experiences, and insights.

Group interview: Similar to the individual interview but conducted with a small group of people with similar characteristics and experience. Allows group members to discuss their opinions and attitudes with others. Interviewer can determine the trends in group beliefs and knowledge based on the responses of the group members.

Observation: While an activity is going on, an observer records what he/she sees either using a checklist or by taking descriptive notes. The observation can include information on: the setting (the actors, context, surroundings); the actions and behavior of the actors; and what people say, including direct quotations.

Secondary data sources: Reports and other written documents which provide information on the activities planned and carried out.

With the above introductory information, participants should then be able to decide, for each of the evaluation questions:

1) whether the information to be collected is quantitative and/or qualitative;

2) from whom or what source the information should be collected;

3) what data collection techniques should be used.

Regarding the "data collection source", it is important that information collection not be limited to community-level data gathering. Even though the program evaluated may be community-based, in many cases it will be important to collect information from institutional personnel who are involved in the program in order to adequately answer the evaluation questions.

For this task, the participants should work in the same small groups to which they were assigned in Step 6. As in Step 6, their work should be recorded in a large Data Collection Planning Chart. Examples from the work on the "Training" component of the GAFNA project are seen below. The teams will probably require 3 to 4 hours to complete this task.

The GAFNA Experience

Data collection planning chart

Program component: _____

Evaluation questions	Quantitative &/or qualitative	Information sources (where or from whom)	Data collection technique
1. For each training activity, was a training plan developed?	Qual.	• Project files	Secondary Data Source
2. What type of orientation was provided to training facilitators for each training event?	Qual.	• Facilitators • Project Manager	Individual Interviews
3. Was a report prepared on each training event?	Qual.	• Project files • Project Manager	Secondary Data Source Interviews
4. To what extent did different categories of trainees use the training they received?	Qual.	• Trainees • Project Manager	Individual Interviews

Step 8. Develop data collection instruments

Based upon the evaluation questions developed in Step 6 and the choice of data collection techniques in Step 7, team members will develop draft data collection instruments for the interviews and observations to be carried out. In this step team members will continue to work in the same groups as in Steps 6 and 7. For each **evaluation question**, and for each category of persons from whom they have decided information should be collected (as recorded in the third column of the Data Collection Planning Chart) the team develops one or more **interview questions** or **observation elements**.

When each team has completed this task, the questions and observation elements should be compiled into **one interview and observation guide for each category of interviewee.** For example, there would be one guide for women's management committees, and one for nurses. The Evaluation Coordinator should provide the team with both an explanation of how the **interview guide** and **observation guide** will be used as well as guidelines on how to develop each of these types of instruments. Developing good data collection instruments is not an easy task and it is not expected that team members will produce perfect instruments in a short period of time. For this reason, following preparation of the draft instruments by the team members, time should be allowed for the evaluation coordinator and one or more members of the evaluation coordinating group to review and revise the instruments.

An **interview guide** is a set of mainly open-ended questions used either with an individual or group to collect detailed, primarily qualitative information. It is important to point out that the in-depth interview guide is quite different from a traditional **questionnaire.** A questionnaire is used in a very structured and identical fashion with each interviewee. The in-depth interview guide, on the other hand, is a more flexible tool which "guides" the interviewer but which allows him/her to adapt or modify the questions, to some extent, as the interview proceeds. For the purposes of the evaluation, one interview guide must be developed for each type of group to be interviewed, for example, "project supervisors" and "community health nurses." While the guides for each of the types of groups to be interviewed will differ, many of the questions will be the same, given that certain evaluation questions will apply to more than one category of interviewees.

The necessary ingredients for development of an interview guide include the evaluation questions to be answered through the interview and knowledge of how to formulate good questions. In a process evaluation, the interest is primarily in collecting in-depth information on people's attitudes, opinions, and knowledge. Therefore, primarily open-ended questions are required to elicit in-depth qualitative information. In addition, the formulation of the

questions should follow these criteria:

They should be clearly and simply worded.

The formulation of the question should not suggest the answer.

They should not be "double-barreled", ie, asking two things in the same question.

They should not be formulated in the negative.

The questions should be carefully sequenced with easier questions preceding the more difficult ones, and the less intimate ones coming before those which ask for more personal answers. The interview guide may contain questions which require both quantitative and qualitative responses.

The GAFNA Experience

A portion of the interview guide for Community Health Nurses

1. *What was your role in the Nutrition Education Pilot Campaign (NEPC)?*
2. *What was the role of the Mothers' Committee in the program?*
3. *To what extent did they assume that role?*
4. *Did you receive your fuel subsidy?*
5. *Was the fuel given adequate for carrying out your NEPC activities?*
6. *What was your role in monitoring the NEPC activities?*
7. *Were you trained on how to monitor the NEPC activities?*
8. *What information did you collect in the monitoring?*
9. *How frequently did you monitor the activities?*
10. *Did you encounter any obstacles in monitoring the activities?*
11. *What did you do with the information you collected?*

In in-depth interviewing, it is preferrable that notes be taken on sheets of plain paper, because the length of the responses cannot be anticipated, and also because the notes of responses should not be limited by space on an interview guide. The interview guides can be typed double-space to facilitate reading but space does not need to be left on the guides to record interviewees' answers.

In qualitative data collection, the pretesting of the interview guide is less important than in cases where a structured questionnaire is used. This is because the questions can and should be modified, if necessary, during the data collection process. If time is available, members of the evaluation team can informally test the guides, and modifications can be made before they are copied.

An **observation guide** is a tool which helps the observer structure his/her observation of certain aspects of an activity which are of interest to the evaluation. While the activity is being carried out, the guide is used by the observer, as discretely as possible, to record key information on the content and/or process employed. Development of an observation guide requires understanding of the evaluation question to be answered and identification of the key aspects of the activity to be analyzed.

Observation guide for performance by traditional communicator

	Adequate	Rather Adequate	Not Adequate	Remarks
Message content				
Flow/Sequence				
Participant involvement				
Discussion				
Role play				
Songs				
Review				

In the GAFNA evaluation only one day was allotted for the development of the data collection instruments and this turned out to be inadequate. One day is probably sufficient for the evaluation team members to develop the draft instruments, but an additional one or two days is required for the revision of instruments and for producing multiple copies which are ready for use by the fieldwork teams.

Step 9: Finalize sample of data collection sites and interviewees

Final decisions must be made regarding the data collection sites, the sample of persons who will be either observed or interviewed at each site, and the schedule for the data collection by site. Due to the complexity of determining the data collection sample, this task is mainly the responsibility of the Evaluation Coordinating Group. In Step 3 the data collection zones and sites were determined. In Step 7 the types of persons to be interviewed and observed were identified. In this step final decisions must be made regarding the characteristics and number of each type of interviewee per data collection site as well as the detailed scheduling of the site visits, i.e., date and time. Based on the decisions made in Steps 3 and 7 regarding the data collection sites and types of interviewees, here final plans are made regarding the data collection sample. The "Data Collection Planning Worksheet" , shown below, can be a useful tool for deciding what types of data collection will take place at each site.

Data Collection Planning Worksheet

Region:_____

Number of groups/individuals to interview or observe per site:

Data collection sites	community health nurses	mothers	traditional communicators
Kerowan	*2(Individual)*	*10 (2 groups)*	*3 (1 group)*
Benbara	*1 (Individual)*	*10 (2 groups)*	*4 (1 group)*
Winola	*2 (Individual)*	*10 (2 groups)*	*3 (1 group)*

Once this worksheet is completed, another table should be prepared which indicates for each site the dates and approximate time that each type of group/individual will be interviewed or observed.

Decisions regarding the evaluation sample should be prepared by the coordinating group, and their proposal for data collection sites and interviewees presented to the entire evaluation team at this stage in the workshop.

Planning for group interviews

The number of persons who participate in each group interview should be from 6 to 10. Groups of this size are desirable for two reasons. The small group allows all participants to contribute their ideas to the discussion and is much easier for the interviewer to facilitate than is a group with more than 10 participants.

Based upon the characteristics defined for each type of interviewee, the team should decide upon the best process for choosing specific group members. It is important that whoever is responsible for identifying interviewees clearly understand the characteristics defined for each type of group and the number of interviewees per group. Scheduling the interviews should take into account the time required to conduct each interview (approximately $1\,^1/_2$ hrs). Generally a maximum of two group interviews can be conducted per day per team.

Phase III: Field Data Collection and Analysis

Based upon the elements of the evaluation methodology developed in Phase II, the third phase consists of the data collection and analysis carried out in the field. As explained earlier, not all evaluation team members will participate in this phase unless the evaluation team is small (maximum 10-12 persons). If all evaluation team members participate in the fieldwork, one or two days should be added onto the Phase II planning workshop for the Step 10 orientation. Whatever the number of persons who participate in Phase III, they should be divided into several fieldwork teams, probably with 4-6 members each. Fieldwork team members will be involved in all four steps in this phase.

Phase III: Field Data Collection and Analysis

Step 10: Orient fieldwork teams

Step 11: Conduct interviews and observations

Step 12: Analyze information collected

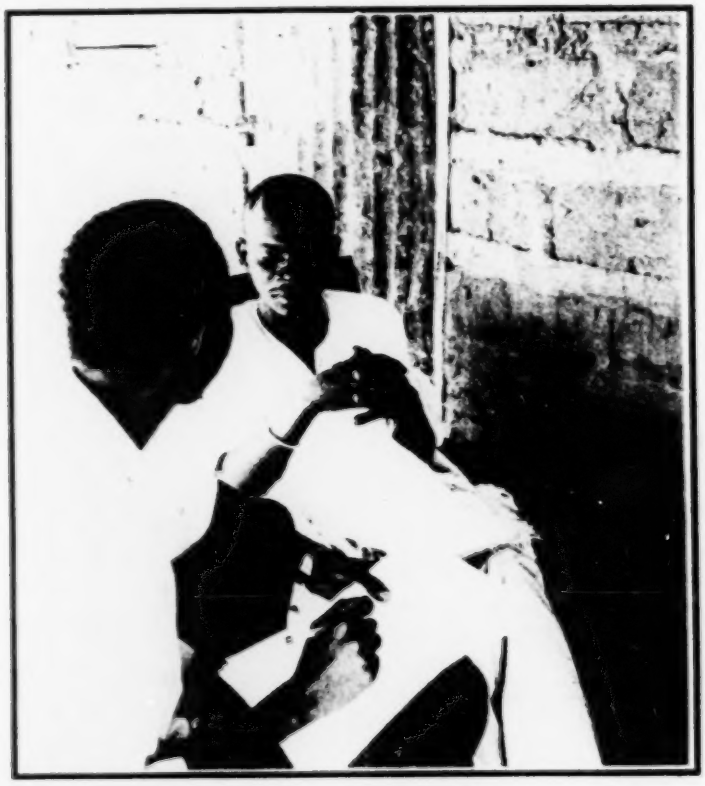
Step 13: Summarize fieldwork findings

Step 10: Orient fieldwork teams

Prior to beginning the fieldwork, an essential preliminary step is the orientation of the fieldwork team members. The orientation, which should last one or, preferably, two days, should focus on several key topics: logistical arrangements for the field work phase; roles and expectations of team leaders; roles and expectations of team members; in-depth interviewing skills; note-taking; and the analysis of qualitative data. During the orientation, priority should be given to the development of team members' in-depth interviewing skills.

Logistics and expectations of team members

It is important that the fieldwork team members be informed of the logistical arrangements which have been made for the fieldwork period. Each team should be informed of: the travel schedule for each day in the field; the lodging and meal arrangements; and the sites where they would be conducting interviews. Most of the logistical and administrative planning for the fieldwork should have been done ahead of time but the final details can be discussed at this time.



Each fieldwork team has a leader. The role of the team leaders must be explained to the leaders themselves, as well as to the other team members. Team leaders' responsibilities can include: to assure that necessary logistical arrangements are made; to develop a sense of team spirit and cooperation amongst the team members; to encourage the participation of all team members and respect for each member's contribution; to delegate responsibility for data collection and analysis according to individual ability and interest; to reinforce the interviewing techniques presented during the orientation; to facilitate collective analysis of the data collected on a daily basis; to ensure that by the end of each day the synthesis of the data collected that day is completed in writing; to ensure that by the end of the field work period information has been collected relative to all of the evaluation objectives.

Team members must also understand the expectations of them during the fieldwork phase. They include: to contribute to the well-being of the team in all possible ways; to accomplish the team task in the field; to participate in conducting interviews; and to participate on a daily basis in analyzing the data collected.

In-depth interviewing skills

The quality of information collected in both individual and group interviews depends to a great extent on team members' **in-depth interviewing abilities**. During the workshop, the attitudes, knowledge and skills required to conduct effective in-depth interviews should be addresed. Those same skills should be continually reinforced by the team leaders during the fieldwork itself.

What makes a good interviewer?

Attitudes:
- respect for group participants' ideas, cultural values, traditional ideas
- horizontal relationship between interviewer and interviewees
- commitment to "learn" from interviewees rather than to "teach"

Knowledge:
- familiarity with evaluation questions and interview guides for each type of interviewee
- principles of group dynamics
- non-verbal behaviors which encourage and discourage interviewees
- steps in the interviewing process

Skills:
- in-depth questioning strategies
- active listening
- note-taking
- small group facilitation

All of the above topics should be addressed during the orientation. As many exercises as possible should be carried out which allow team members to both observe and practice using interviewing skills. Participatory learning activities, including role plays and exercises in pairs or triads, can be designed for each of these topics.

Role plays, such as the examples shown below, can be used to help participants identify effective and ineffective approaches to interviewing. (Remember that role plays are more likely to accomplish their objectives if they are practiced ahead of time.)

Sample role plays

The ineffective interviewer

An interview on infant feeding practices is carried out with a mother using a structured questionnaire. The interviewer demonstrates both verbally and non-verbally a lack of interest and disapproval of the interviewee's responses. He is not attentive when the mother is speaking, he verbalizes his impatience with her and abruptly interrupts her several times when she gives a lengthy answer or when her responses are not what he anticipates.

The effective interviewer

A group interview is conducted with 4 mothers regarding their beliefs and practices related to diarrhoea. The interviewer demonstrates, both verbally and non-verbally, her undivided attention and interest in the responses of each of the mothers. She encourages all of the group members to participate, asks good follow-up or "probing" questions to get the interviewees to expand upon their initial responses, and she accepts all of their responses with the same degree of openness and enthusiasm.

Following the dramatization of each role play, participants can be asked to assess the interviewer's approach. The group can identify strengths and weaknesses in the interviewer's attitude and skills, and develop a list of "do's" and "don't's" for their own interviews.

Questioning strategies

In interviewing, the primary tool for collecting information is the question. Team members must recognize that there are different kinds of questions, that different types of questions elicit different types of responses, and that certain types are more appropriate for in-depth interviewing than others.

Closed questions should be used to a limited extent.

Example: *Did you like the nutrition education program?*

Leading questions should be avoided.

Example: *Would you agree that the traditional communicators were popular with the women?*

Double-barreled questions should be avoided

Example: *Did the women's committee successfully organize the growth monitoring and the role play sessions?*

Open-ended, probing and **follow-up questions** should be extensively used.

Examples: *What were your impressions of the activities carried out by the traditional communicators?*

Why do you say that they were effective?

What do the others in the group think about what Mrs. Diallo has said?

The interview guides for each category of interviewees are the basis for conducting the individual and group interviews. Unlike a **questionnaire** which should be rigidly followed, the interview guide is used in a more flexible manner. If the interviewee does not adequately understand one of the questions included in the guide, the interviewer can reformulate the question until the meaning of the question is clear. In many cases, in addition to asking the questions included in the guide, the interviewer will need to ask other **probing** and **follow-up** questions to assure that precise and detailed information is obtained from the interviewees. The aim of the questions is to collect information which answers the **evaluation questions**. The interview guide is a tool which the interviewer must use in a flexible and creative way in order to accomplish that objective.

Principles of note-taking

Almost as important as knowing which types of questions to ask is knowing how to effectively record the responses given. The following principles of note-taking should be respected.

1. Notes should be recorded in the first person.
2. Key words and ideas should be recorded.
3. Original, descriptive phrases or sayings should be recorded word - for-word as quotations.
4. Information should be recorded exactly as it is heard and not "filtered" based on interviewers' ideas or values.
5. As many notes should be taken as possible.
6. In group interviews, the different opinions in the group should be recorded

Materials to be prepared for each data collection team

- copies of the evaluation questions
- copies of interview & observation guides
- large writing pads or plain white writing paper
- pens
- file folders to organize notes by category of interviewees
- paper clips and/or stapler and staples

Step II: Conduct interviews and observations

Once the orientation session is completed, the fieldwork phase of the evaluation can begin. In fact, it is important that the orientation be conducted immediately before the data collection phase so that the team members do not forget the skills they have learned.

The daily data collection schedule

In most cases, the majority of the data collection will consist of interviews. There are several considerations in planning the interviewing schedule.

1) Data collected in each interview should be analyzed the same day that it is collected.

2) Between 2 and 4 hours is required to analyze the data collected in a group interview and somewhat less for an individual interview.

3) It is easier for the team to conduct the interviews in the morning in order to be able to complete the data analysis by the end of the same day. However, the time of day at which the interviews will be held should be decided in discussion with persons who are familiar with the daily schedule of the target group members and/or through discussion with target group members themselves.

Experience has shown that it is usually feasible for a team, composed of one interviewer and one or two note-takers, to conduct one to two group interviews or two to three individual interviews per day. Planning the daily fieldwork schedule should take into account time for: travel to the data collection site; greeting institutional or community leaders; gathering interviewees together or waiting for them to arrive; conducting the interviews; traveling to the lodging site; meals; rest time; and data analysis.

Preliminary contacts with institutional or community leaders

Once the schedule for conducting the interviews is set, someone should travel to each interview site and meet with the institutional or community leaders. The purpose of the upcoming team visit should be explained to them and their collaboration in organizing the interviews elicited. Specifically, their help will be needed in identifying the potential interviewees and inviting them to participate. The designated person should be provided with detailed information about: the characteristics and number of individuals or groups to be interviewed; the date and time of each interview. Where group interviews are to be conducted, it is extremely important to explain the rationale for small groups, 6 to 10 persons. It is often assumed that the visiting team will be impressed if the groups are larger. Giving the contact persons at the sites clear information about the team's objectives and expectations will help ensure that when the team arrives at the interview site, they will find the appropriate type and number of persons ready to be interviewed.

Conducting group interviews

The following steps and practices should be followed iwhen conducting group interviews:

1. Before the interview starts

Choose a quiet, secluded spot
Verify the characteristics of group participants
Limit the number of participants to approximately 10
Seat participants in a circle
Sit at the participant's level

2. Introduction to the interview

Greet the participants
Explain the purpose of the interview
Assure them of the confidentiality of their responses
Encourage the participation of all group members

3. Facilitate the group discussion

Conduct interview in local language
Use interview guide to structure the interview
Interview should last 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours
Take as many notes as possible

4. Ending the interview

Review interview guide
Thank the participants

Mini feedback session

Following each interview, it is useful in the field for the study team to take 15-20 minutes to discuss the dynamics of the group session, to identify constraints and to formulate lessons learned to be applied in subsequent interviews. Analysis of the information collected will be carried out in Step 11.

Questions for the mini-feedback session

1. *What are your observations regarding the participation of the group members during the interview? What non-verbal behaviors did you observe which suggested that the participants were either interested and involved or the contrary? Were there problems in terms of group participation? What can be done to improve the participation of the interviewees in the future?*
2. *How was the facilitation during the interview? Were there weaknesses? How can the facilitation be improved in the future?*
3. *Were there factors outside of the group which distracted the participants? How can these be avoided in the future?*

Step 12: Analyze information collected

The data analysis is based on the information collected in both interviews and observations with community and institutional collaborators, on the secondary data sources and on the evaluation team members' own experience with the program being evaluated. In this discussion, the data collection (Step 11) and data analysis (Step 12) are presented as two separate steps in the evaluation process. In fact, they occur concurrently. As discussed above, each day during the fieldwork, the information collected should be analyzed that same day, by **category of interviewees,** for each of the **interview questions**. At the conclusion of the fieldwork phase, the conclusions of the daily analyses should be synthesized for each of the **evaluation questions.**

Approach to the analysis of qualitative information

In quantitative data collection, the data analysis is done after the data collection is completed. In qualitative data collection, there are two reasons why the data collection and analysis must be done concurrently. Qualitative

data collection is an *iterative* or spiral-like learning process. In other words, in the analysis of the information collected in one interview certain aspects of the information may be unclear, others may suggest additional facets of the topic which were not initially included in the evaluation questions. In such cases, the insights from the analysis of one interview will suggest modifications which should be made in the content of subsequent interviews. A second reason why immediate analysis of the information collected is important is that while extensive notes should have been taken, the facilitator and note-takers usually retain additional information and insights about the interviewees' knowledge and attitudes which do not appear in the notes. Therefore, the sooner the data analysis takes place, the more easily this information can be retrieved.

The analysis of qualitative information is considerably more difficult than that of quantitative data. In qualitative data collection there are guidelines, but there are no set formulas for the analysis of the data. The process of analyzing qualitative data can be fascinating but it is also very demanding in terms of the intellectual energy and creativity which it requires. The data analysis processes should be facilitated by someone with skills both in qualitative data analysis and in the facilitation of team work. In this regard, the role of the team leader as facilitator of the data analysis process is critical and he/she must be carefully chosen.

The main technique for analyzing qualitative data is *content analysis*. Through content analysis of the information collected conclusions are formulated for each of the evaluation questions. The analysis process involves identifying the categories of responses in the raw data.

Daily data analysis

The daily data analysis process is structured around the **interview questions** asked of each category of interviewee. For example, if one day the team conducts individual interviews with two nurses and one group interview with mothers, the two sets of data (nurses and mothers) will be analyzed seperately based on the questions in the two interview guides.

During the analysis the team will often want to refer back to the **evaluation questions** to clarify the objective of the interview questions. The entire team should participate in the analysis sessions in which a simplified approach to the content analysis of the interview information collected is used.

1. Re-read the interview questions. One at a time the interview questions are read to the group. This allows the team members to recall the focus of each interview question.

2. Read the interview notes. The note-takers read aloud the responses found in the notes for each question. If there are more than one set of notes, all should be read.

3. Discuss the responses. The team leader asks the group to examine the information taken down in the notes, and also other comments made by the interviewees that may not have been written down, to clarify exactly what the interviewees were saying.

4. Categorize the responses and summarize findings. Together the group identifies the categories of responses in the information collected and summarizes the findings in a concise fashion. The example below illustrates a summary of the findings for one interview question.

Summary of findings for an interview question

Question: What did women think about the use of songs in the nutrition education program?

For example, perhaps all of the interviewees agreed that the use of songs was beneficial while a few stated that they were repetitive. The finding for this evaluation question might read:

"The women interviewed unanimously reported that the use of songs was both enjoyable and an easy way for them to understand and to remember the nutrition messages. A few of the interviewees stated that the songs were too repetitive and that new songs should continuously be introduced."

As the example illustrates, the summary should indicate the trends in the information collected in terms of whether the attitudes or ideas expressed were shared by all interviewees, the majority, half, a minority or few of them. While the objective is not to quantify the different types of answers, the **trends** should be reported.

5. Identify unclear or missing information. The last step in the discussion of each interview question is for the group to determine whether there is any missing or unclear information that should be further investigated in subsequent interviews. Each of the team members should take note of supplementary questions which the team decides should be added to the interview guide.

Synthesis of data analysis

At the conclusion of the field work phase, at least one day must be scheduled for each of the field teams to summarize its findings. In a working session in which all members of the fieldwork team participate, findings must be synthesized for each **evaluation question**. In this session the evaluation questions are read one at a time, the findings from the different groups of interviewees which are relevant to each question are read from the daily analyses (prepared in Step 4 of daily analysis process) and the **team findings** are written for each **evaluation question**.

Step 13: Summarize fieldwork findings

At the conclusion of the data collection phase, the findings from the different fieldwork teams must be summarized. For each **evaluation question**, the findings of all of the teams must be integrated into one set of evaluation findings. This task should be carried out by the **team leaders** in collaboration with one of the members of each of the fieldwork teams. It is strongly recommended that this task **not** be carried out with all of the fieldwork team members. The participation of all team members in this task would make it very time-consuming.

In this step, for each evaluation question two representatives of each of the fieldwork teams should present their **team's findings.** Based upon the findings of the various teams, a summary of the findings relative to each evaluation question must be developed. The summaries should be concise and clearly worded so that they can easily be understood without referring back to the original evaluation questions. This approach will greatly facilitate the discussion of the findings by the evaluation team in Step 14.

The GAFNA Experience

Examples of findings for two evaluation questions:

Question: To what extent did the community contributed to the project?

In human resource terms the communities have made a considerable contribution to the project: the participation of the Traditional Communicators and Management Committees; the attendance of the mothers at the sessions.

continued

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They have not, however, made any financial contribution to the project. This arrangement may contribute to dependency on "outsiders" rather than to a strategy which is sustainable within the community.

Question: To what extent was the project conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health?

The ministry staff interviewed stated that the Nutrition Education project is in keeping with the Ministry of Health's health/nutrition concerns and objectives. However, one of the Regional Health Teams stated that the program was "running parallel" to the Ministry of Health programs rather than as an integrated component of their program. This Regional Health Team stated that they wish to be more involved in the initial planning of such projects and that periodic coordination meetings should be organized by project staff at their level.

The findings for each of the evaluation questions should be typed and multiple copies prepared for the Phase IV workshop.

Phase IV: Workshop to Formulate Lessons Learned

In most program evaluations, the external evaluators are responsible for formulating recommendations based on evaluation findings. In keeping with the concept of a participatory evaluation, in this methodology the Evaluation Team members are responsible for studying the evaluation findings and for formulating recommendations. The team's involvement in this task is critical in terms of developing their sense of ownership of the recommendations and their commitment to implementing them. In this phase, the team also formulates conclusions regarding the participatory methodology.

Phase IV: Workshop to formulate lessons learned

Step 14: Formulate lessons learned for each evaluation question

Step 15: Team assessment of the evaluation process

Step 16: Summarize evaluation results

Step 14: Formulate lessons learned for each evaluation question

As stated earlier, in a learning process approach to program evaluation, the ultimate aim of the evaluation exercise is to develop lessons learned for application in the future. In this step, all of the Evaluation Team members who participated in the workshop in Phase II come together again for 2-3 days to discuss the Fieldwork Teams' findings and to develop a set of lessons learned. The role of the Evaluation coordinator, as in other phases of the process, is both to provide the group with a structure for the task and to participate as one of the team members.

The lessons developed by the team are to be based not only on the problematic aspects of the program identified in the evaluation but on the positive or effective aspects as well. Important lessons can be learned not only from what did not work but also from what worked well and can be used in the future.

Typically there are a large number of evaluation questions and, therefore, of findings. For this reason, the group process must be clearly structured in order for the group to accomplish the task in a timely fashion. It is suggested that for this task the participants be grouped by program components, in the same groups in which they worked in Step 6 (development of evaluation questions). In this way, the team members who developed the evaluation questions for a particular program component will study the findings and develop lessons for that same component.

Each of the team members should receive a list of the findings for his/her program component. Each group should have a strong facilitator who encourages group members to systematically discuss each of the findings and to formulate one or more lessons learned. The skill of the facilitator in helping the group to develop clear and concise lessons is of utmost importance. The clearer the lessons learned the more easily they will be understood by others.

The GAFNA Experience

Examples of evaluation findings and lessons learned

Evaluation Findings	*Lessons Learned*
Development of nutrition education themes and messages Development of the nutrition themes & messages was based on two excellent quantitative-qualitative studies on maternal dietary beliefs & practices and on child feeding practices.	Development of themes and messages for nutrition education should reflect cultural beliefs and practices of the target group. In-depth qualitative studies are particularly important as a basis for the development of the educational content.
Training of the traditional communicators (TCs) The majority of the TCs are Mandika speakers and most of the training was conducted in Mandika. The training was not adapted to the language needs of the Sarahule and Wolof speakers who, therefore, did not fully benefit from the training.	It is not appropriate to conduct a training program in only one language. If there is ethnic variation amongst trainees, the training must be adapted to the linguistic needs of all.
Community health nurses' fuel subsidy In most cases, the nurses report that they received their fuel subsidy (D35 per month). However, in many cases, the payments were received late out in the regions.	The system for distributing fuel subsidies should be reviewed to ensure timely payment in all regions.

The involvement of program stakeholders in the development of lessons learned in this way has proved to be effective. The lessons which stakeholders develop tend to be based not only on the evaluation findings but also on their understanding of policy priorities, program context, resource availability, etc. Participation fosters ownership. It has been found that where program stakeholders have participated in developing lessons, they not only appear to have a clearer understanding of the evaluation results and of how they should be used, but also a greater commitment to implementing the recommendations. The complete set of lessons learned should be included in the evaluation report.

Step 15: Team assessment of the evaluation process

In this step, feedback is elicited from the entire evaluation team on the evaluation process itself. This is an opportunity for all of the team members to reflect on the evaluation process and to generate conclusions regarding the participatory methodology. Given the innovative nature of the evaluation methodology, it is important that it be assessed and lessons generated regarding its usefulness in the future. A simple tool can be developed for carrying out this assessment.

The rationale for the use of the participatory methodology is that the approach contributes to the development of practical lessons for improving program implementation and to the development of staff skills. The assessment of the methodology should, therefore, address these two aspects.

Different techniques can be used to carry out this assessment including: an individual written questionnaire; collective assessment in small group discussions. The Evaluation Coordinating Group can be responsible for designing an assessment tool.

The GAFNA Experience

In the GAFNA evaluation team members completed an individual written questionnaire on their impressions of the evaluation process. Here are a few of their responses:

A forum for discussion
"The evaluation activity created a forum for those who were involved at different levels of program implementation to review our combined efforts and to decide together how we can improve the program strategy." (Josephy Jassey, GAFNA Field Supervisor)

Strengthening team collaboration
"The evaluation helped me to understand that every individual believes that his/her ideas and thoughts are important. By respecting the point of view of other team members your relationship with them is strengthened and all team members work harder." (Baboucar Jobe, GAFNA Project Assistant)

Learning from others
"I benefited from the other team members who shared their knowledge and experience with me." (Malang Fofana, Nutrition Assistant)

Listening to the community
"The evaluation created a forum for us to listen to the community's views, criticisms and suggestions to ensure more realistic and appropriate planning in the future." (Muhamed Freeman, GAFNA Field Supervisor)

Demystifying evaluation

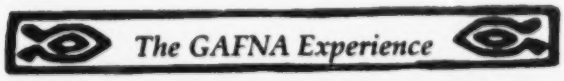
"Evaluation has ceased to be a word I fear because now I know how to plan an evaluation exercise that will produce valid results." (Kinday Samba, GAFNA Project Manager)

Practical lessons for the future
"The evaluation helped us develop comprehensive and practical lessons for future programs." (Saihou Sanyang, GAFNA Project Manager)

Future evaluations
"I can't overemphasize the need to apply this type of participatory methodology in the future to help us improve our nutrition programs." (Bintou Keita Kunju, Food & Nutrition Unit)

Step 16: Summarize evaluation results

In most cases, both the evaluation findings & lessons learned will be lengthy. Therefore, it is useful to prepare a summary of the evaluation results. The summary should address the major elements in the program framework. This task can be completed by several of the Evaluation Coordinating Group members in collaboration with the Evaluation Coordinator. This task will be very time consuming if more than 3 or 4 people are involved.



The GAFNA Experience

In the GAFNA evaluation summary, results were developed for each of the key aspects of the components in the project framework. Here are two examples of the summary results.

Project monitoring & supervision: Monitoring and supervision of project activities at field level took place but was neither systematic nor frequent. This was largely due to the fact that monitoring roles, guidelines and tools for key actors were not developed. In the future, monitoring roles must be defined, tools developed and training of key actors provided to ensure efficient and systematic monitoring and supervision of activities at all levels, including follow-up of mothers in satellite villages.

Effectiveness of the three education strategies: The evaluation team concluded that the most effective nutrition education method was the combined use of the Traditional Communnicators and Community Health Nurses. While the Traditional Communicators are skilled at disseminating information in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways, the involvement of the Community Health Nurses is important to reinforce the Traditional Communicators' knowledge of nutrition concepts and to help them plan and evaluate their activities.

Phase V: Development of Action Plan

In this phase, a draft program action plan is developed based on the evaluation findings and lessons learned. This task should be carried out by a small group of program managers and implementors, and can take one or two days or more, depending upon the level of detail desired.

Phase V: Development of Action Plan

Step 17: Develop action plan based on evaluation findings

Step 17: Develop action plan based on evaluation findings

In most evaluations, the last step in the evaluation process involves the development of recommendations. In the case where the program evaluated is ongoing, evaluation results should be directly applied to the program. Often, however, there is a lack of continuity between evaluation results and their application to program planning. In many cases when the application of the findings is left for "later" the application does not take place. Many excellent evaluation reports have gathered dust on program managers' shelves and were never used.

To overcome this problem, it is proposed that the evaluation exercise should include this step, in which a draft action plan for the program is developed based on the evaluation findings and lessons. The product of this step will not be a polished, final action plan but should include the main program objectives, components, activities and strategies based on the evaluation results. Experience has shown that the inclusion of this step as an integral part of the evaluation process increases the likelihood that evaluation results are integrated into program planning.

Details of the action planning process are not discussed here as most organizations have their own approach to program planning. It is suggested that a sub-group of the larger evaluation team be involved in this planning exercise. Their draft plan should later be discussed with the larger group.

Phase VI: Finalization and Dissemination of the Evaluation Report

In this important last phase in the evaluation process two important but sometimes neglected steps are included.

Phase VI: Finalization and Dissemination of the Evaluation Report

Step 18. Write evaluation report

Step 19. Distribute and discuss evaluation results with program collaborators

Step 18: Write evaluation report

An obvious, but not always completed step, is the preparation of the evaluation report. It is important that at the outset of the evaluation process (Phase I) responsibility for writing the report be assigned to one or more persons involved in the study and a date for completion decided upon. This is frequently overlooked and can contribute to delays in finalizing the report.

The content and style of an evaluation report depends upon how its function is defined. Should it merely report the results or should the steps in the process be described? In most evaluation reports, the focus is on reporting the findings and recommendations. If, however, the report is viewed as an "educational tool" which can help the reader to learn about the methodology itself, then the steps in the process should be discussed as well. In any case, it is important that it be written in simple language so that it can be understood by all program stakeholders.

The report should include a 1-2 page "executive summary" of the major findings and recommendations. While hopefully the whole report will be read by those who receive it, many people will not have time to read the entire document. The Executive Summary appears at the beginning of the report but it should be written last.

All of the lessons learned and summary findings prepared in Phase IV should be included in the report, as well as the summary results from step 16. The action plan may be voluminous and it should be decided whether to include it in the same document or for it to be separate.

Step 19: Distribute and discuss evaluation results with program collaborators

An important aspect of any evaluation is that the findings be shared with all program collaborators. It is critical that everyone involved in the program not only be informed of important lessons learned but also have the opportunity to discuss the results. In most cases, only a few copies of an evaluation report are produced and hence, it is distributed on a limited scale. Alternatives to the typical and limited approach should be explored and the Evaluation Coordinating Group should develop a plan for how the findings can be distributed and discussed with all key program collaborators.

Creative strategies for diffusing study results from the central to the community level should be explored. A few approaches which have been successfully tried include:

- preparing different versions of the study findings for different readers, for example, the full evaluation report can be distributed to a limited number of stakeholders;
- a summary of the report (perhaps 10 pages) can be distributed to all program staff who were in any way involved with the evaluation;
- a 2-page "evaluation highlights" can be widely distributed to a variety of people who would be interested in the main evaluation findings and recommendations;
- holding meetings with program collaborators in each of the program regions to discuss the lessons learned and their possible application;
- asking field workers to discuss the main findings and recommendations with program collaborators at the community level.

There are certainly other creative ways that evaluation results can be distributed and discussed with the interested persons.

The GAFNA Experience

Shortly after the evaluation was completed, GAFNA organized a series of meetings with different categories of project collaborators from the ministry to the community level to discuss the lessons learned and to plan how to put them into practice. According to the project manager, "The evaluation report became a tool for discussion and action rather than being forgotten to gather dust in people's offices."

Conclusions on the Methodology 4

Experience in various countries has shown that a number of the constraints associated with traditional evaluation methods can be overcome through the use of the participatory methodology described in this manual. There are a number of key features of the methodology which appear to contribute to its effectiveness.

Involving program stakeholders

By involving program stakeholders (information-users and decision-makers) in all phases of evaluation planning and implementation they can overcome their anxiety about evaluations and create a sense of ownership of evaluation results.

Simple data collection techniques

Through the use of simple data collection and analysis techniques all program staff can be actively involved and can develop basic data collection skills.

Focus on lessons learned

By focusing the evaluation exercise on developing the lessons learned from program implementation, program stakeholders can more openly analyze past problems and successes.

Strengthening team collaboration

The involvement of different levels of project collaborators as team members can contribute to the development of more open relationships

between them during the evaluation activity which often continue after the evaluation exercise.

Combining outside and inside evaluators

The outside evaluator brings objectivity, skills in data collection methods and in group facilitation. He/she orchestrates the process and participates as a team member. The insiders bring to the evaluation their intimate knowledge of the program and their commitment to discovering how to improve **their** program.

Practical recommendations for the future

Based on evaluation findings, team members develop concise and practical recommendations related to each of the program components. The involvement of program staff helps assure that the recommendations are realistic and feasible.

Revised action plan

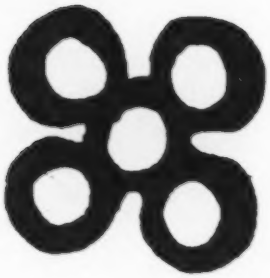
The evaluation does not end with the formulation of beautiful recommendations. A last step in the process is the development of a revised program action plan which incorporates the lessons learned in the evaluation.

Learning experience for program stakeholders

Past evaluation team participants agree that involvement in the entire evaluation process increases both their understanding of program components and dynamics and also their skills in program evaluation.

Learning experience for evaluation coordinator

Each participatory evaluation is an occasion for the evaluation coordinator to explore alternative ways of structuring the evaluation process and of strengthening participant learning.



5 Caveats of the Methodology

The participatory evaluation methodology presented in this manual has been used with health and nutrition programs in a variety of settings. It has been shown to be an effective tool for involving program stakeholders in the evaluation of their own programs and for developing practical lessons for improving program performance. However, the process is not magic. The success of a participatory program evaluation depends on a variety of factors related to the availability and carefully structured use of human and other resources. A number of caveats, all discussed in detail in this manual, must be seriously taken into consideration if the methodology is to be successfully used.

Careful planning

Each step in the evaluation process must be carefully planned with respect to the timing, human and material resources required and responsibility for the tasks at each step in the process. To facilitate the planning process, evaluation organizers should start by reading the entire manual so that they have a clear idea of what is involved from start to finish. Only then will they be able to begin planning in detail how to organize the process.

Coordination of fieldwork logistics

Perhaps the most complicated aspect of the entire evaluation process is the planning required for the fieldwork phase. Logistical planning for the fieldwork must begin early and responsibility for logistical arrangements before and during the fieldwork clearly defined.

Scheduling data collection and analysis

In developing the daily schedule for fieldwork data collection, it must be remembered that the analysis of qualitative data is very time-consuming. As a rule of thumb, the analysis of a set of interview data will take approximately twice as long as conducting the interview itself. It is recommended that the time planned for actual data collection, including travel time, be limited to a half-day to leave the remainder of the day for data analysis.

Skills in qualitative data collection and analysis

Most teams have reported that the most difficult part of the entire evaluation process is the analysis of the qualitative data. It is imperative that at least one person on the evaluation team, and preferably several, have strong skills in qualitative data collection and analysis. The evaluation coordinator should have these skills. A team of persons with skills only in quantitative research methods will encounter numerous problems using this essentially qualitative methodology.

Involvement of program managers

A tendency has been observed in participatory evaluations for program managers to delegate **too much** responsibility to program implementors for conducting the evaluation. The concept of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation implies that both program implementors **and** managers must be actively involved in all phases of the process. The involvement of program managers is of critical importance to ensure that their priorities and opinions are incorporated into the evaluation process.

Effective group facilitators

For all of the group planning, training, and data analysis sessions experienced group facilitators are required. Group facilitators should have skills in active listening, questioning and synthesizing. The presence of good facilitation skills will help ensure that groups accomplish their tasks in an effective and timely fashion.

Scope of data collection

The evaluation methodology is particularly suited for use with community-based programs. However, an evaluation of such programs should include data collection not only at the community level but also at the institutional level from staff who are involved with the program. It is only by assessing the opinions and attitudes of institutional and community actors that the evaluation will yield a holistic understanding of program accomplishments and constraints.

Experienced fieldwork team leaders

The success of the fieldwork phase depends largely on the skills of the team leaders. They must be carefully chosen in terms of their: physical stamina; ability to motivate and coordinate team work; group facilitation skills; analytical thinking skills required for qualitative data analysis; experience with the type of program being evaluated.

Time commitment on part of team members

The evaluation methodology involves a learning process which can be effective only if team members fully participate in that process. This requires that individuals chosen as members of the full evaluation team and/or of the field teams must be available to participate on a full-time basis for the duration of the corresponding phases of the evaluation.

Support from management

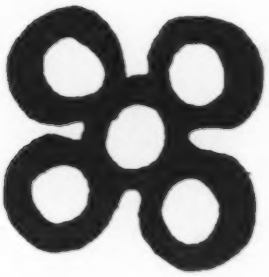
The use of the participatory methodology will be effective only if it is understood and supported by management. Institutional and program managers must understand the rationale and practicalities of this type of methodology and must provide the human and other resources required. Without their full support the evaluation cannot succeed.

Choice of evaluation team members

Both the effectiveness of the evaluation process and the later impact of evaluation results depend upon choosing carefully the persons to be involved in the process. Choice of the program stakeholders, the decision-makers and potential information-users, must be carefully made to ensure that the right people are included in the process.

The challenge

The methodology proposed in this manual may seem like a rigid recipe. It is hoped, rather, that it will be seen as a framework which helps groups of persons within programs and institutions to design participatory program evaluations using some of these elements and modifying others. Participatory evaluation is a young field and the best ways to go about it remain to be discovered. The challenge to all of us is to experiment and to develop methodologies which help us to more effectively learn from program constraints and successes.



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